EPA & Pavillion - Nov. 27

Date	HeadLine	Outlet
11/26/2012	Siegel: Fracking harms environment, planet's climate	Ventura County Star - Online
11/26/2012	Tests, controversy, more testing	Casper Star-Tribune - Online

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Siegel: Fracking harms environment, planet's climate
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Ventura County Star

Sports

Re: David Quast's Nov. 18 guest column, "The case for hydraulic fracturing":

A tidal wave is about to sweep over our state. Oil companies are snapping up thousands of acres across central and Southern California. Armed with dangerous new techniques, the petroleum industry aims to exploit a vast reservoir of previously inaccessible shale oil — and the consequences for our air, water and public health could be devastating.

This oil will be extracted using hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, as the industry commonly calls it. Fracking is a rapidly evolving technique that involves blasting huge amounts of water, along with toxic chemicals, deep into the ground to break up rocks and extract oil and gas.

Many Californians don't realize we're facing a fracking boom and don't know much about the technology's risks.

But our nonprofit organization, the Center for Biological Diversity, has documented fracking in nine California counties, including Ventura.

Petroleum industry documents show growing interest in the approximately 14 billion barrels of shale oil in the Monterey Shale formation, which lies beneath some of the most beautiful wildlife habitat and most productive farmland in America.

Some claim that California's environmental laws will protect us. But state officials have admitted that they currently do not even track, let alone regulate, fracking. The state has even been criticized by the Environmental Protection Agency for doing too little to protect our underground water supplies from oil-industry pollution.

Under pressure from concerned lawmakers, the state Department of Conservation's oil and gas division has belatedly begun to develop fracking regulations. But the public has yet to see even a draft version of these rules. Meanwhile, state officials have little idea when or where fracking is occurring — or what chemicals are used in the process.

The oil industry often claims there's nothing to fear because fracking has been used for decades. But today's fracking is new and different, and as the practice has changed and expanded, so has damage to the environment. New techniques include the use of chemical concoctions called "slick water" that help generate the pressures needed to break apart rock.

The risks are well documented. The EPA, for example, recently confirmed fracking-related water pollution in Pavillion, Wyo. That's disturbing when you consider that fracking routinely employs dangerous chemicals like methanol and benzene.

About 25 percent of fracking chemicals could cause cancer, while many others harm the nervous, endocrine, immune and cardiovascular systems, according to scientists. A recent study from the Colorado School of Public Health found that fracking contributes to serious health problems in people living near fracked wells.

Fracking will increase air pollution. Our poor air quality already keeps far too many children home from school and adults home from work because of asthma and other respiratory ailments. Protecting the air we breathe and our children's

health is urgent.

And fracking also threatens our planet's climate by releasing large quantities of methane, a potent greenhouse gas. Fracking the billions of barrels of oil in the Monterey Shale will light the fuse on a carbon bomb that will shatter our state's efforts to fight global warming.

Other risks may be hidden by industry secrecy. Few knew, for example, that radioactive probes were used with fracking until one of these dangerous devices fell off a truck in Texas earlier this year. This radioactive probe wasn't found for almost a month.

California lawmakers must move quickly to address fracking. To protect our health and our future, this dangerous practice should be banned in California. Trashing our air, water and climate is not the right way to move our state forward.

Kassie Siegel is director of the Center for Biological Diversity's Climate Law Institute in San Francisco.,

GOSC writes:

Californians must also consider what increased production means in terms of limited resources and the current status of an O&G aging industry infrastructure.

There are numerous unanswered questions about the available science and safety that hydrogeoligists and geolgists must be vigilant in exploring to insure the safety of diminishng water sources and protection of the CA wilderness and agricultural areas.

First and foremost should be trasparency in the industy's projected use of our fresh water resources which will surely be impacted by increased production...exacerbated by the proposed fracking process.

Californians should not be penalized by higher prices due to diminished availability caused by profit motivated energy giants.

Californians and their future should come first when it comes to anticipating our water needs.

And when these industries pack up to go to new areas to exploit, their production remains should be as little as possible.

bionox writes:

You drill a hole through geological strata, some of which hold water, some of which hold hydrocarbons. You attempt to shield and isolate the borehole from the adjacent strata with steel and concrete. You find a stratum that holds hydrocarbons and is amenable to fracking. You inject your proprietary cocktail (Haliburton's secret sauce, gotta love that!) under high enough pressure to crack and fragment the shale and release the hydrocarbons. You suck up the good stuff and leave the bad. You trust your engineering and Nature to retain the integrity of your borehole for an indefinite period. My questions are:

1. What is in your "cocktail"?

2. How much of it remains in the ground?

3. How do you prevent earth movement from compromising your well casing and shielding?

4. What are your liabilities if the fracking fluid finds its way to and subsequently contaminates an aquifer?

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5. How would you pay those liabilities?

6. How would you restore an aquifer?

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11/26/2012

Tests, controversy, more testing

2012-11-26T11:00:00Z 2012-11-26T09:10:18Z Tests, controversy, more testing

By ADAM VOGE

Star-Tribune energy reporter

trib.com

The dispute over whether the oil and gas industry -- namely hydraulic fracturing -- contributed to water contamination near Pavillion has lasted years. Here's a look at how events unfolded:

*2005-2009: Some Pavillion-area residents worry that nearby drilling is harming their drinking water wells. Encana, the natural gas field's operator, claims the bad water is common to the area.

*Late 2009-early 2010: After getting complaints from some Pavillion area residents, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency tests 41 drinking water wells in the area.

*August 2010: The EPA recommends that several Pavillion-area residents with private water wells find other sources for water used in drinking and cooking, after testing shows compounds officials believe shouldn't be in the water.

*Summer 2010: The EPA drills two monitoring wells in the Encana Oil and Gas-owned Pavillion field in order to test the water and determine whether it had been polluted.

*March 2011: The Pavillion Working Group, a collection of state and local officials, private citizens and representatives from Encana, begin meeting to determine what information is needed to solve the dispute.

*November 2011: The EPA releases data from its round of water testing near Pavillion. The testing detected high levels of benzene, methane and other chemicals. Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson said the chemicals may be linked to hydraulic fracturing.

*November 2011: Midland, Texas-based Legacy Reserves LP backs out of a deal to purchase wells in the Pavillion field, citing the federal investigation.

*December 2011: The EPA releases a draft report tentatively linking hydraulic fracturing to groundwater contamination near the Pavillion gas field.

*December 2011: Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead calls for a broader groundwater investigation of the area.

*January 2011: The EPA extends public comment on the draft report, which was originally set to expire in January.

*March 2012: Mead signs a bill which allocates $750,000 to help residents affected by the water controversy. The state would later decide to use the money to construct cisterns.

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*March 2012: The EPA agrees to further testing of its two wells near Pavillion, to clarify questions about the first round of results. The agency agrees to bring in the U.S. Geological Survey to conduct the testing.

*April 2012: The USGS begins a second round of testing on the wells near Pavillion.

*June 2012: State oil and gas supervisor Tom Doll says some Pavillion-area residents were motivated by greed while speaking at an industry event in Canada. Doll resigned the next month.

*September 2012: The USGS releases data from the last round of testing with no analysis. The EPA and industry offer differing interpretations of the numbers, with EPA saying they're "generally consistent" with earlier results.

*October 2012: EPA officials announce another comment period delay, this time to January 2013, at a Pavillion Working Group meeting in Riverton. A long-awaited peer review is also pushed back, likely to January.

*October 2012: Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality Officials tell a small group of Pavillion-area residents that 14 months of air testing near the field showed no air quality violations. Residents expressed concern over the monitoring equipment's location and elevation.

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